

How does your organization make its facilities more appealing to the public? Do you decorate your lobby? Deodorize your kennels? Disguise ugly parts of the building?

That was the question we asked for this issue's Coffee Break, and you responded by describing some of the great ways that you've spruced up your shelters to make them more cheerful and inviting to potential adopters.



We are very fortunate to have a professional artist as a volunteer! She turned our cage-less adult cat room into a colorful garden by painting a flower garden all around the room in bright, vivid colors—even added birds and butterflies! Everyone comments on how cheerful and fun it is. The cats just love it, and of course they tried to help with the project! They'd take off with the paint brushes, thinking they had found a new toy! The artist thought she would never get it finished.

—Marilyn Spivey, volunteer coordinator
Friends for Animals Adoption Shelter
Granbury, Texas

1) We utilize the posters from our auction each year to change up the messaging on our walls and to keep it fresh. 2) Flower boxes are refreshed regularly at our entry. 3) Our dogs and cats have colorful bedding in their kennels. We may be poor, but we are always clean and well organized.

—Terri Inglis, executive director
Homeward Pet Adoption Center
Woodinville, Washington

We believe the best way to make our facility appealing is to keep it clean and to greet each and every visitor, caller, etc. with a smiling face and a "Can I help you?" attitude. We pride ourselves on the fact that visitors often ask if we have animals because they can't smell any due to our commitment to cleanliness.

—Jean Meyer, animal caretaker/
adoption counselor
Keokuk Animal Services
Keokuk, Iowa

Our front lobby is a nice, soothing, green color with lots of pictures of happy, adopted dogs and cats on the wall for folks to see. Our cats live cage-free in a room, and our dogs all have 5-by-10 runs and get to have a canine buddy when appropriate. Potential adopters like to see the dogs with others for companionship. We have made the best of our giant warehouse building, which used to be an antique barn but now is the only no-kill shelter in our city!

—Denise Bitz, executive director
Brother Wolf Animal Rescue
Asheville, North Carolina

Our cat room is bathed in sunlight, as we have floor-to-ceiling windows in our Cat Gazebo and skylights all around. Our dog-walking trails have comfy park benches for rest stops, flowering shrubs, and poop bag/waste stations for convenience!

—Jennifer Smieja, development coordinator
HAWS—Humane Animal Welfare Society of
Waukesha County
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Our Cat Cottage is set up with three free-roaming cat rooms and one kitten room where they are kept in separate Tokyo cages. Each room has various amusing cat characters painted on the walls. We have cats playing in a rock 'n' roll band, looking out windows, and dressed up in togas holding olive branches. This keeps the room bright and encourages positive feelings. We also have small kitty porches that are screened in with wire mesh that the cats can go out and lounge in to get some sun. The "porches" are small, high off the ground, and are focused around one window per room. People love seeing a cat come out to greet them as they walk up to the main building!

—Laura McKelvey, animal care specialist
PAWS Atlanta
Decatur, Georgia

Our walls throughout the shelter have been a soft, bluish-grey for years. A soothing color, but also boring. A number of months ago, staff started hanging various kinds of pictures to try to liven up the place. Then one of our board members (an artist) suggested a bright, kiwi green for the lobby. It worked! It fills the area with energy, which is just what we needed! And it looks terrific as a backdrop color for our wall of Lupine collars and leashes. Kiwi green rocks!

—Diane Lanier, board president
Humane Society of Central Illinois
Normal, Illinois

Our lobby is now a bright, welcoming, and inviting area. We have fish tanks, pictures, chairs, plants, and a bulletin board that we change with the seasons.

—Lorry Harbaugh, secretary/caretaker
Bloomfield Township Animal Shelter
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

We are a small shelter by big-city standards, but we recently added an addition that almost doubled our size. We put the kitten room in a section of the reception area with a big window for viewing them doing all of their kitten antics. We also put in large viewing windows for the cat rooms, which have small kitty steps up the walls and "cat walks" around the ceiling perimeter. The cats love it, and people enjoy watching them.

—Fay Jamison, board member
Humane Society of Harrison County
Shinnston, West Virginia

We make our shelter more appealing by brewing flavored coffee in the reception area where people enter. The aroma of flavored coffee is their first impression. People tell us that rather than smelling like a shelter that it smells like a gourmet coffee shop.

—Betty Flemming, treasurer/shelter manager
Heart of Jackson Humane Society
Holton, Kansas

With a memorial gift from a daughter of one of our faithful dog walkers, we are working on a Memorial Dog Park where people can sit with a dog they are thinking of adopting or introduce their own dog or dogs to a possible adoptable dog. The park will be in memory of Lloyd Williamson—the dog walker who passed away—and for all those who visit the shelter and need a place to perhaps grieve for a pet they've lost or to spend time brushing a resident dog or talking with them or simply letting them know they are loved. Our small no-kill shelter is very special—we think one of best in the country.

—Kelly Brook, director on the board
Lincoln County Animal Shelter
Newcastle, Maine

We display artwork in our courtyard and also have placed cement shortcut paths that lead to an outside sitting area. Our shelter also has outside play areas.

—Vincent Medley, assistant director
San Antonio Animal Care Services
San Antonio, Texas

Congratulations to Laura McKelvey, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. Her organization, PAWS Atlanta, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appétit!

Check out the latest Coffee Break question and submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win **a free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an e-mail or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.